CALCAREA CARBONICA—A WARNING.

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IN THE HOMEOPATHIC WORLD, p. 61, vol. xxii. (September, 1887), a most interesting case is given, reported by Dr. Powell, of a tumour in the right side of the abdomen, hard and painful, which was successfully treated by remedies alone, after having been condemned to operation. The man who was the subject of this tumour suffered as well from psoriasis palmaris of both hands, the palms of the hands being deeply fissured and the skin extremely dry and thick. This man happened to speak to me one day lately, that is some five years after the report given in THE HOMEOPATHIC WORLD, and he introduced himself by stating how much he owed to homeopathy for the cure of the dangerous and painful affection with which he had suffered, " but," said he, showing me the palms of his hands, " here is a condition that no medicine hitherto has been able to

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touch." " Well," said I, " that is indeed remarkable, for although I question whether I should have been able in any way to relieve you of the abdominal affection from which you suffered, I cannot help thinking that I could prescribe successfully for your hands." The patient, be it remembered, was not consulting me seriously ; I had only met him casually. Accordingly I prescribed some *Calcarea carbonica* 3x, 5 grs. to 2 drachms of water, five drops three times a day, and along with this an application of vaseline mixed with our *Calendula officinalis*. I saw nothing more of the patient for some six months, and one evening calling at his house I asked after his hands. He showed them to me triumphantly, pointing out how smooth and natural the palms of his hands were ; and upon my complimenting him upon his good recovery and asking if they had got well while taking my medicine, he significantly remarked, " Well, not quite ; it was not until three weeks after your prescription had been finished that my hands began to get well. Then they gradually recovered, and are now better than they have been for the last seven or eight years."

I give this case because I consider it conveys a very important lesson—a veritable warning. The prescription of *Calcarea* was due, I must confess, entirely to the appearance of the hands. In our *Hull's Jahr's Manual*, and under " *Calcarea*," we find mention made, as amongst the curative symptoms of *Calcarea*, " rhagades in the skin, particularly of those who wash in water ; " and, acting upon this keynote, a case is reported by me and commented upon in the September number of *The Monthly Homeopathic Review* of 1879, a case which amongst other things illustrates the fact that *Calcarea* can and does act curatively in low dilution.

The case now reported illustrates a still more important truth, and it is one that ought to be taken to heart seriously by the young practitioner ; it illustrates this very important and practical fact, that we often fail to cure chronic disease by homeopathy for no other reason than that we are too anxious to complete the cure in a short time, or are in haste to satisfy the patient that our remedy is acting beneficially : hence the warning.

Had the patient whose case I have just reported been a regular patient of mine—that is, had I been in regular attendance upon him, seeing him at short intervals—the

chances are that my efforts to cure him would have been unavailing. I would probably have gone off to some other selection than *Calcarea*, and have in this way rendered treatment—the proper treatment—unsuccessful ; but the case is particularly interesting from the point of view of ear cases.

The majority of ear cases that require alleviation are cases that have lasted a long time ; they are, I need hardly say, old-standing cases of deafness. Now, taking all the cases of deafness that one meets with at a hospital clinique, there are but a very small proportion of these that have continued for a shorter period than, say, six months.

It goes without saying that homeopathy, being a superior system of curative medicine, ought to be able to deal with every class of disease, ear disease being no exception, in a manner altogether more successfully than is possible by any other system or method of treatment.

It is equally certain that homeopathy has not done anything like her duty in regard to these chronic diseases of the ear. Why is this ? I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the reason is, we have not allowed a sufficient time for the appropriate remedy to act.

To go back again to our case where the palms of the hands were fissured, we find a prescription of *Calcarea* given—we may, I think, leave out of consideration the local application of the vaseline and Calendula—and we find improvement taking place some weeks after the exhibition of this prescription. Considering the length of time that the case had lasted and the immense benefit that has accrued within a reasonable distance of time from the prescription of the right remedy, it is not unreasonable, I think, to suppose that the disappearance of the disease was due to the action of the *Calcarea*. That is to say, it acted only when a sufficient time was allowed to it.

Now this is exactly where we have gone wrong in regard to diseases of the ear. We have not allowed the curative principle to act for a sufficiently long time. We have kept wrangling as to the dilutions of remedies and as to the proper selection, but it does not seem to have occurred to anybody to rely to a far greater extent than has hitherto been done upon a single solitary dose with a sufficient interval allowed for the manifestation of its curative effects.

Given a curative principle—a principle that has showed

itself curative in, we will suppose, the deafness of a young person of ten years of age—what might we expect from such a principle brought to bear upon a much longer standing and pathologically similar case of deafness in a person of sixty-five to seventy-five years of age or even older ? Is it at all unreasonable to suppose that in the latter case this curative principle will require a much longer time to effect its purpose, and that the reaction that it sets up in the organism is a reaction which goes on working to the ultimate dispersion of the infirmity, or to suppose that this curative principle which we know to act in accordance with the law of similars will only be injuriously modified by the administration of a second dose given shortly after the first one ?

These at all events are thoughts that have exercised my mind very considerably for some time past ; so much so that I determined, in treating these cases, to rely more than ever upon the administration of a solitary, single, uninterfered-with dose, and to allow a sufficient interval to elapse before the administration of a second one. And as we have been deterred from prescribing single doses of a remedy in homeopathy by the constantly reiterated assertion that no remedy can be successful which does not cover all the symptoms of the disease, as found in our repertories, I determined to throw aside all provings and repertories and to rely simply upon the action of the uninterfered-with curative principle of plants, which I believe to be none other than growth-force, and to freely administer tinctures at the hospital made by myself from ordinary field plants in accordance with indications such as occurred to me from the habits of the plants, their appearances, and other apparently unimportant features.

From the time I began prescribing in this way, the success that I obtained from treatment has been, and continues to be, much greater than I have ever been able to secure by the methods usually pursued.

As, however, it would be impossible to enter here into any lengthy explanation of the matter, and as I have already done so at some considerable length in papers that have been sent to *The Hahnemannian Monthly* of Philadelphia, I will say no more on the subject, except that the clinique at the hospital is open to any duly qualified practitioner who wishes to come and see for himself whether single doses of remedies can affect the dispersal

of long-standing serious symptoms such as deafness, and that I hope our young practitioners will be led by cases such as I have just narrated, to allow the homeopathic remedy to act over an interval to some extent corresponding with the duration of the disease to be cured. I hope that they will not continue the barbarous habit of repeating remedies as frequently as food is taken, from no other and no better reason, were it known, than that food and curative medicine are one and the same thing—an idea that is as contrary to fact as anything can well be.

When I look back upon the many years spent in investigating the action of the homeopathic remedy, and when I see how much I have lost, speaking for myself, by being over-anxious in treating chronic diseases, and when I see the glorious results that are to be obtained from the prescription of single doses, I cannot but call to mind a conversation I had with a friend in Southampton to this effect :—" I was," said my friend to me, " speaking to an American homeopathic practitioner about an article you recently contributed, and my American friend asked if you prescribed one dose at a time and allowed it to act. ' No,' said I, ' he does not that I am aware of.' ' Then,' said my friend, ' he does not know what homeopathy is ; ' " and I have only to regret that this warning was not taken in time, and to say that I believe, without offence, this warning applies as much nowadays to other practitioners as it did then to me.

At all events, there are hosts of cases of perfectly curable chronic diseases to be met with, which ought to have been, but have not been, successfully treated by homeopathy, and the reason of this is, I am convinced, more from the too frequent repetition of the dose than from the much discussed questions of the dilution or even of the homeopathic selection.